

2012 State Damage Prevention Program Grants Final Report
CFDA Number: 20.720

Award Number: *DPTH56-12-G-PHPS16*

Project Title: *SC Palmetto Utility Protection Service*

Date Submitted: *September 23, 2013*

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Specific Objective(s) of the Agreement

- *Develop and implement methods for effective communication*
- *Foster support and partnership with stakeholders*
- *Support a Damage Prevention Education Program for industry stakeholders*
- *Support Public Awareness and Stakeholder Education*
- *Laws and regulations of the damage prevention process*
- *Foster and promote the use of improving technologies*

Workscope

- *Element (1): Participation by operations, and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of methods for establishing and maintaining effective communications between stakeholders from receipt of an excavation notification until successful completion of the excavation, as appropriate.*
- *Element (2): A process for fostering and ensuring the support and partnership of stakeholders, including excavation, operators, locators, designers, and local government in all phases of the program.*
- *Element (4): Participation by operators, excavator, and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of effective employee training programs to ensure that operators, the one call center, the enforcing agency, and the excavators have partnered to design and implement training for the employees of operators, excavators, and locators.*
- *Element (5): A process for fostering and ensuring active participation by all stakeholders in public education for damage prevention activities.*
- *Element (8): A process for fostering and promoting the use, by all appropriate stakeholders, improving technologies that may enhance communications, underground pipeline locating capability, and gathering and analyzing information about the accuracy and effectiveness of all locating programs.*

Accomplishments for this period (Item 1 under Article IX, Section 9.01 Progress Report: “A comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives established for the period.”)

For Element 1, our objective was to develop and implement methods for establishing and maintaining effective communications between stakeholders from receipt of an excavation notification until successful completion of the excavation. With awarded funds we began the development of IVR (Interactive Voice Response) for Positive Response. This project is still in the developmental stages due to still developing and testing the Positive Response web portal. Positive Response is mandatory in South

Carolina in June 2015, but we are planning to have the system ready by the first quarter of 2016. IVR enhances Positive Response because it allows people who do not have internet access in the field or otherwise to access the status of their locate over the phone. Although we cannot report on the successfulness of this project, we fully expect it to greatly enhance the Positive Response program in South Carolina.

For Element 2, the objective was to foster stakeholder support. With awarded funds, we put on an open house and invited stakeholders (members, excavators, contract locators, etc) throughout the state. The open house was set up for any stakeholders who wanted to learn more about South Carolina 811 and the role we play in damage prevention in South Carolina. We aligned this event with our 35th Anniversary. All attendees were given a tour of the center and had the opportunity to listen in on a call with a Customer Service Representative. The event was successful and over 100 people attended this event from around the state and learned more about how South Carolina 811 works on a daily basis.

In Element 4, the objective was to develop and implement effective employee training programs and further support damage prevention education. With awarded funds, we enhanced our damage prevention training classes that are given to various groups around the state. Requested grant funds were used to purchase a training video to be shown in these training sessions. This video about One Calls of America spokesperson, Cliff Meidl, gives an account of his traumatic experience of cutting through an electric line. This video has been very beneficial to the training classes in explaining the importance of safety by calling 811. With awarded funds, we also were able to purchase an audience response system to increase audience participation as well as measure the effectiveness of the training classes. This was purchased at the end of the grant period because of a change in how we wanted to use grant funds. We have used this software in a couple of training classes and the attendees have enjoyed the audience response system. We have only received good feedback about implementing this into our training. We are also able to learn how many people are familiar with the details of the law and safe excavation around utility lines which will help us to determine areas that need to be focused on in future training sessions. With awarded funds, we also were able to further employee training through various classes. These classes included Adobe Photoshop, HTML5, Microsoft Windows 8, Windows Server 2012 and Querying SQL. These classes helped SC811 staff to continue to improve our website through coding and graphics, and continue to improve the overall technology of the center.

In Element 5, our objective was to continue supporting a damage prevention education program through public awareness and advertising. With awarded funds, we were able to purchase additional educational items, such as excavator manuals that were given out Trade Shows, Damage Prevention Training Classes, and other events that pertained to damage prevention. These excavator manuals go through the law extensively and have proven to be a good resource for all stakeholders. Awarded funds were also used for an extensive cable television campaign. In the months of April and August we advertised on Time Warner Cable, Comcast, and Charter on a variety of networks. These campaigns encompassed the entire state of South Carolina. Using these grant funds on this large scale campaign allowed us to use our own funding to do additional advertising on

billboards, radio, and magazines. We were also able to put on some events for National Safe Digging Month and 811 Day using our own funding and funds from stakeholders.

In Element 8, our objective was to improve technology to enhance communications. Awarded funds were used to purchase a back-up phone server. This server gives us more redundancy in our phone system. We already had redundancy with our telephone service provider, but this hardware gave us local redundancy. If our primary system goes down, we can now failover to this new device. With this purchase, we are now 100% redundant on our phone lines, which is essential for our service and damage prevention.

Quantifiable Metrics/Measures of Effectiveness (Item 2 under Article IX, Section 9.01 Project Report: “Where the output of the project can be quantified, a computation of the cost per unit of output.”)

Element 1 - The cost per unit for the Positive Response IVR cannot be quantified. This system is still being created and will not be finalized until the Positive Response system is finalized.

Element 2 – Over 100 people attended our Open House and learned more about how South Carolina 811 operates on a daily basis.

Element 4 – The Cliff Miedl training video and audience response system have vastly improved our training classes. The video has been shared at many meetings where we are promoting 811 and it has been a big hit with every audience. Although the audience response system has only recently been implemented, the audience of these training classes is visibly more engaged. This software also collects audience responses and allows us to learn what information is understood by the audience and what information the attendees are not clear about. This allows us to constantly improve our training classes to better educate all stakeholders. The training classes for employees have also increased efficiency at the center and helped us to better utilize our technology.

Element 5 - Through our extensive advertising campaign which used mostly grant funding, we were able purchase cable/digital advertising and radio advertising which encompassed the entire state. A computation of cost per unit output is difficult to determine when it comes to advertising because although people are hearing our message, they may not need to use the service for months or years so there is no way to measure how many people are simply learning. Currently we are using Google Analytics to determine the effectiveness of our advertising. Google Analytics informed us that our web traffic in April was up 52% compared to April 2012, so we believe that our campaign was very successful. Also our locate requests in April were up 14% compared to April 2012.

Element 8 – The cost per unit of the backup phone server cannot be quantified. This will be utilized only in the event of an outage.

Issues, Problems or Challenges (Item 3 under Article IX, Section 9.01 Project Report: “The reasons for slippage if established objectives were not met.”)

There are no issues, problems or challenge to report.

Final Financial Status Report

The final financial report has been sent as a separate attachment to the GA.

Requests of the GOTR and/or PHMSA

No actions requested at this time.